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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KUALA LUMPUR 000452

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SUBJECT: MALAYSIA'S ANTI-PIRACY CONFERENCE, MAY 18-19

REF: KUALA LUMPUR 193

Summary and Comment

1. (SBU) The Kuala Lumpur International Conference on Piracy and Crimes at Sea, May 18-19, was both well-timed given the global focus on piracy and well-placed near one of the epicenters of global shipping. Participants from 66 countries included Ambassador Keith and representatives of six U.S. agencies. Malaysian organizers focused on littoral states' success in reducing piracy in the Strait of Malacca. U.S. presentations provided examples of multinational cooperation from the Gulf of Aden and the Caribbean. The conference discussed the importance of addressing the root causes of piracy and the unique challenges posed by the situation in Somalia. The Malaysian organizers produced a Chairman's statement that highlighted the primary responsibility of littoral states to tackle piracy and reiterated the need to address on land the root causes of piracy.

2. (SBU) Comment: Good attendance at the anti-piracy conference, along with its timeliness, made this a success for Malaysia. There was healthy skepticism about the KL conference's emphasis on the relevance of the experience with piracy in the Straits of Malacca to efforts off the coast of Somalia, but most participants found elements of interest among the broad range of topics discussed. Malaysia predictably used the conference to burnish its anti-piracy credentials in the Strait of Malacca. Despite the conference's attention to addressing "root causes" of piracy, Malaysian speakers chose to attribute success in the Straits solely to modest levels of joint cooperation among littoral states, overlooking the effects of the 2004 tsunami and 2005 peace accord in Aceh that corresponded with dramatic decreases in piracy. The Chairman statement's focus on the primary responsibility of littoral states for anti-piracy and maritime security reflects Malaysia's long-standing policy in the Strait of Malacca and its wariness of involvement by outside powers. End Summary and Comment.

Overflow Participation

3. (SBU) The Malaysian Foreign Ministry organizers initially planned for some 200 participants at Malaysia's May 18-19

international conference on piracy, although the number of participants ballooned to 318. In the end, the conference attracted very wide participation from some 66 countries, multiple industry associations, inter-governmental organizations, think tanks and academia. Foreign Minister Anifah made a prominent reference to the piracy conference in his press availability following his meeting with Secretary Clinton on May 14. The GOM encouraged USG participation in the conference and accommodated our speaking requests. Ambassador Keith attended the conference along with U.S. participants from State, Navy and the Navy Criminal Investigative Service, PACOM, and DEA.

Strait of Malacca, Multinational Cooperation

¶4. (SBU) The conference program featured six sessions covering: the global piracy situation; industry's response; legal frameworks; regional best practices in the Straits of Malacca and the Caribbean; cost-sharing among stakeholders; and the way forward (reftel). The Malaysian organizers consistently attributed success in greatly reducing piracy in the Straits of Malacca to the cooperative patrols of Malaysia, Indonesia, and Singapore. USG presentations consisted of a Combined Maritime Forces description of coordinating counter-piracy in the Gulf of Aden and a U.S. Coast Guard discussion of maritime law enforcement operations in the Caribbean. Both presentations provided models of multinational coordination and joint actions that could inform and potentially enhance littoral states' cooperation

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in the Strait of Malacca.

Addressing Root Causes, Somalia

¶5. (SBU) The importance of addressing the root causes of piracy developed into another key theme at the conference. The discussion focused on current challenges in Somalia; presentations did not touch on the recent precedent in the Straits with the Aceh situation. Recognizing that the root causes of piracy are on land and not at sea, the conference sought to highlight the unique and enduring challenges to establishing the rule of law and viable economic development in Somalia. A number of Somali presentations, including the Director of Fisheries for the state of Puntland, urged greater engagement by the international community with local authorities on the ground. Conference participants frequently noted discrepancies between the fractious and unstable governance structures in Somalia compared to the relatively stable and comparatively well-resourced organizations responsible for security in the Straits.

Conference Chair's Statement

¶6. (SBU) The Malaysian organizers initially proposed a conference statement that praised the Strait of Malacca littoral states for reducing piracy "without any assistance from outside powers," which participants noted would have overlooked substantial capacity-building assistance from the U.S., Japan and others. The proposed statement also invited the UN to consider "establishment of an international maritime force." (Note: the proposal echoed that made by Prime Minister Najib, then Deputy Prime Minister, at the November 2008 Peru APEC summit, at which he called for an international naval peace-keeping force. End Note.) After discussion, the Malaysian Foreign Ministry produced a Chair's Statement, which recognized the Contact Group as the primary mechanism for coordinating maritime forces in the counter-piracy effort off the coast of Somalia. The statement pointedly emphasized the primary responsibility of littoral states to address piracy and other threats to maritime security, and reiterated the need to address on land the root causes of piracy. We have forwarded the full

statement to EAP/MTS, EAP/RSP and PM.
RAPSON